DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 917 CE 030 110

AUTHOR	Gudenberg, Karl A.
TITLE	Toward an American Rural Renaissance: Realizing Rural Human Resource Development during the Decade of the Eighties. Final Technical Report.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. for Work and Learning, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO	498MH00022
PUB DATE	Sep 81
CONTRACT	300-80-0786
NOTE	46p.; For related documents see CE 030 111-119.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agency Cooperation; *Economic Development; Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; Educational Resources; Financial Needs; Futures (of Society); *Human Resources; Investment; Land Use; Linking Agents; National Programs; Needs Assessment; *Program Development; Public Agencies; *Rural Areas; *Rural Development; Technological Advancement; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	Private Sector; *United States

ABSTRACT

The future of rural America depends on the abilities of diverse interest groups and leaders to piece together educational and economic resources in creative ways, fitted to the needs of their respective regions and communities. It has become essential that rural persons be plugged into national and international production, marketing, and governmental strategies. An examination of the issues and problems associated with the educational and economic development of rural America points to 10 needs areas. These areas are determination of the realities of the changing face of rural America; the nature, types, and scale of rural development; balancing rural human resource and technological development; linking land use and economic development; linking education and training with rural economic development; enhancing traditional and innovative rural support services; serving special rural interest groups; and rural coalition building. Specific goals for solving problems in each of these areas have emerged from a series of regional conferences and from a national conference hosted by the National Institute for Work and Learning. (Related reports on American rural development are available through ERIC--see note.) (MN)

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ED2069117

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT

TOWARD AN AMERICAN RURAL RENAISSANCE:

Realizing Rural Human Resource Development During the Decade of the Eighties

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Contract No.: 300800786

September, 1981

CE 030 110

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Center for Education and Work

PROJECT NARRATIVE SUMMARY REPORT

Project Title: TOWARD AN AMERICAN RURAL RENAISSANCE:

A STATEMENT OF NATIONAL GOALS AND A SERIES OF REPORTS ON RURAL HUMAN RESOURCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DURING THE DECADE OF THE EIGHTIES

It was with the challenge of "realizing rural human resource development during the decade of the Eighties" that several hundred rural community leaders met during late 1980. At four regional and one national meetings, these leaders - including educators, business representatives, farmers, bankers, agricultural extension agents, representatives of rural advocacy groups and minority interest groups, and public agency officials - worked collaboratively to develop consensus on a set of proposed national goals for linking education and economic development in rural America.

The national conference was hosted by the National Institute for Work and Learning at the National 4-H Center in Washington, DC. The conference followed four regional conferences in Alma, Michigan; Farmington, Maine; Charleston, South Carolina; and Ceres, California. Each of the regional conferences was hosted and co-organized by a local collaborative council. Funding for the national conference was provided by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational

and Adult Education, and funding for the regional conferences by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Rural Development.

The principal products of this project are the conferences themselves, a statement of ten proposed National Goals for Rural Human Resource and Economic Development, a series of eight papers on various aspects of education and economic development in rural America, and a "state-of-the-art" report reviewing exemplary education and economic development initiatives.

Behind the project is the assumption that the past decade's historic reversal of population movements and the present decade's renewed emphasis on traditional community-centered values have created an opportunity for "an American Rural Renaissance."

Key to the ability of rural areas to sustain new population growth is the concept of economic development. Telecommunications technologies may revolutionize the location factor in economic development, thereby enabling many people to work in geographic separation from one another, and consequently enabling immigration to cheaper, more spacious rural living.

Key to the ability of rural areas to sustain traditional values of neighborliness, spaciousness, independence, and self-reliance will be the future role of education in the lives of rural residents. The process of adapting new technologies to rural society and of adapting traditional values and roles to a more complex economic base will require high degrees of intelligence and cooperation among diverse

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groups both within and outside rural communities. Perhaps the most respected institutions in rural communities, schools and colleges must be at the center of this transition and training process if the opportunities for a rural renaissance are to be achieved.

Commissioned papers report on rural demographics, economic and employment trends, the role of investment capital, technological impacts, the crisis in rural land use, innovative responses to chronic problems in social and public services in rural areas, and international examples of linking education and rural development. The papers and authors were:

- Rural America: The Present Realities and Future Prospects

  Authors: William P. Kuvlesky and James H. Copp, Texas A & M University

- Nature, Types and Scale of Rural Development

  Author: Frances Hill, University of Texas

- The Role of Investment Capital in Rural Development

  Author: Lloyd Brace, Maine Development Foundation

- Balancing Technological and Human Resources Development: A New Priority for Rural America

  Author: Roger Blobaum, Blobaum and Associates

- Rural Land Use: A Need for New Priorities

  Authors: Wendell Fletcher and Charles E. Little, American Land Forum

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- Linking Education and Local Development: An International Perspective

  Author: Jonathan Sher, Center for Educational Research and Innovation, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

- Enhancing Traditional and Innovative Rural Support Services

  Author: Mary A. Agria, former director, Mid-Michigan Community Action Council

- Toward A More Rational Education-Economic Development Connection in Rural America: The Collaborative Model

  Author: Karl A. Gudenberg, Project Director and Rural Program Officer, National Institute for Work and Learning

- State-of-the-Art Report: Exemplary Rural Education and Economic Development Initiatives

  Author: Susan J. White, Consultant, National Institute for Work and Learning

The proposed statement of national goals for rural human resources and economic development evolved from these reports and the discussions at the regional and national conferences. The proposed goals are:

- To develop a wholly new structure of information and communication between rural areas and the principal sectors influencing change: business/industry, state governments, and the federal government.

- To develop local, state, and regional programs and policies which start from realistic assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of specific rural areas and work toward collaborative strategies joining public and private sector resources into rural development networks.
- To create rural development strategies and projects tailored to the needs of individual firms, the resources of and needs of specific rural communities, and the qualities of life prized by rural residents.
- To assure that investment capital policies and practices treat rural areas with equity and do not produce unintended consequences harmful not only to rural areas but to the nation as a whole.
- To create more effective and balanced linkages between technological opportunities and the educational preparation of rural youths and adults.
- To establish national and state policies which will preserve irreplaceable agricultural farmlands as a vital national resource while encouraging multiple, well-balanced uses for less sensitive areas.
- To establish national, regional, and state priorities and action initiatives which generate realistic linkages between education, training, and rural economic development.
- To rebuild the self-confidence of rural American communities by insuring adequate social services and by creative use of the skills and energies of all rural people.

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- To improve the education, training, and work opportunities for all rural special needs populations through a policy of greater inclusion of their diverse resources in the design and implementation of human resource and economic development programs.
- To develop collaborative mechanisms and processes to build coalitions of rural interests for more rational rural development.

Each of these ten proposed goals is analyzed in the full "Statement of Proposed National Goals for Rural Human Resource and Economic Development During the Decade of the Eighties."

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A STATEMENT OF PROPOSED NATIONAL GOALS FOR RURAL HUMAN RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DURING THE DECADE OF THE EIGHTIES

Developed from findings of the:

National Goals Conference on Linking Education and Economic Development in Rural America

Prepared by:

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September 1981

TOWARD AN AMERICAN RURAL RENAISSANCE:
A STATEMENT OF PROPOSED NATIONAL GOALS
FOR RURAL HUMAN RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DURING THE DECADE OF THE EIGHTIES

The future of our lives in rural America--really the many different rural Americas--depends on the abilities of diverse interest groups and leaders to piece together educational and economic resources in creative ways, well-fitted to the needs of their respective regions and communities.

Education and economic development are complementary activities. Yet in practice we find them crucially disconnected in rural communities. And across that disconnection lie crucial barriers to rural economic prosperity, political consensus, and social and cultural renaissance. These barriers--misused opportunities and resources, failure to anticipate new opportunities, and, most damaging, the tendency toward fatalism in the face of problems--are not inevitable.

The means to remove them is within reach in the form of education and economic development activities of the types described in this report. Considerable effort will be required to create the connections needed. But the feasibility of linking education and economic development in rural development is greater now than at any time since the industrial revolution.

It was with the challenge of "realizing rural human resource development during the decade of the Eighties" that several hundred rural community leaders met during late 1980. At four regional and one national meeting, these leaders--including educators, business representatives, farmers, bankers, agricultural extension agents, representatives of rural advocacy groups and minority interest groups, and public agency officials--worked collaboratively to develop consensus on a set of proposed national goals for linking education and economic development in rural America.

The national conference, hosted by the National Institute for Work and Learning at the National 4-H Center in Washington, D.C. followed the four regional conferences in Alma, Michigan; Farmington, Maine; Charleston, South Carolina; and Ceres, California. Each of the regional meetings was hosted by a local collaborative work-education council.*

This paper offers those goals (and the rationales behind them) as the essence of those many discussions. The voices of leaders from rural communities prevade these goals.

Most crucially, these goals flow from a consensus that the presentation of rural values in the midst of continuing economic change is feasible in education institutions can become a focal point for the local planning to preserve and enhance the life of rural communities. For these people, economic development and growth is a vital need. So is the preservation of a rural way of life. Highly valued and respected as they are in rural communities, education

institutions must serve as the linkage point for those two objectives.

During the 1970's, for the first time in the nation's history, the growth of our cities stopped, while the real decline of rural population was reversed for the first time since the census of 1890. These demographic shifts reflect a reassertion of America's historic rural values: a preference for smallness, friendliness, stability, access to natural surroundings, and family life. Clearly America is foremost a nation of urban and suburban communities and will reamin so. But the hold of rural values remains strong, preferred by a majority of Americans according to the Gallup poll.

Today the classic disadvantages of rural areas--their loneliness, lack of amenities, and (an advantage to some) isolation from world events--need exist no longer. Revolutions in technology, transportation, and communication technologies are rapidly making rural areas economically viable for people with very diverse skills. It has become essential for a rural person who effectively pursues a variety of livelihood options to be plugged into production, marketing and governmental strategies nationally and internationally. (It has become possible to live in a rural mode while "plugged"into a sophisticated economy and polity.)

The realization of this possibility, realizing the contribution which traditional rural values can make to a national society, emerges as the underlying goal of these

conferences and papers.

Among the many pressing issues and problems discussed at the conferences, ten priority areas were developed by a National Advisory Panel (members are listed in Appendix A) and staff of the National Institute for Work and Learning. These priority areas are:

- The Changing Face of Rural America: Myths, Realities, and Trends
- Public-Private Collaboration In Rural America
- The Nature, Types and Scale for Rural Development
- The Role of Investment Capital in Rural Development
- Balancing Rural Human Resource and Technological Development
- Linking Land Use and Economic Development in Rural America
- Linking Education and Training with Rural Economic Development
- Enhancing Traditional and Innovative Rural Support Services
- Serving Special Rural Interest Groups
- Rural Coalition Building

For each of these priority areas, this goals statement identifies a central problem affecting the effectiveness and quality of human and economic development in rural areas during the next decade. In each case a problem is answered by a goal. Examples and rationales are provided to explain both the problems at hand and the proposed goals.

ISSUE: THE CHANGING FACE OF RURAL AMERICA

PROBLEM: Rural America is changing, both in demographics and economics, but we cannot identify the characteristics of change in a timely manner essential to effective management.

Discussion: Approximately 60 million Americans now live in non-metropolitan areas, with 75 percent of all non-metropolitan counties in every region gaining population during the 1970s. Only a small portion of rural people are full-time, commercial farmers. Increasingly they participate in non-farming pursuits both in their rural communities and as commuters as suburban areas turn metropolitan and arteries of economic growth extend into hinterlands. Yet the number of small farms increases, part-time work characterizes much of the labor force, and rural poverty remains tucked among vacation homes. Communications technology also makes rural living more feasible. Computers "cottage industries" may escalate this trend. But technology limits too: rural areas become sites for industrial wastes and precious rural water tables become dangerously reduced and the water itself polluted by intensive use of chemical fertilizers and other ill pursued land use practices. Large scale agricultural methods undermine years of patient conservation education, resulting in losses of irreplaceable topsoil. The very qualities of rural living that attract urban emigrants gradually disappear through increased density and new life styles. The point is not to praise or condemn. Rather we must understand and manage our resources,

both human and environmental, more effectively.

Goal 1: To develop a wholly new structure of information and communication between rural areas and the principal sectors influencing change: business/industry, state governments, and the federal government.

Comments: Accurate information on rural demographics and eocnomics is needed at the regional and subregional level. Information on schools, social services, unemployment, under-employment, occupational structure, and economic activity should be the foundation for planning activities by local communities, prospective employees, and governmental agencies.

An information and communication structure for rural development should include: a detailed, updated data base on regional and subregional characteristics; a convenient, low cost access system useful to corporate planners, site location firms, public and private economic development agencies, and education and human resources planning agencies; and formal, state level rural development task forces of leaders from local and state government, business, labor, education, rural advocacy groups.

o Micro computer-based information retrieval and dissemination systems to link rural communities with state, regional, national and international decision makers and data bases. Adequate technical support and training in system operation is essential.

o More mid-decade and special census data regarding the characteristics of human, economic and educational well being of rural Americans.

o Develop 'One-Stop' Rural Information Centers where access to both public and private information is available to rural people. Particular emphasis should be placed on the more effective and logical linkage of governmental programs, services, regulations and eligibility requirements.

ISSUE: PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR COLLABORATION

PROBLEM: A lack of mutual support between public and private sector planning impedes effective economic development and education in most rural areas.

Discussion: Starting with a few southeastern states in the early 1970's, many state governments have now initiated state-wide economic development programs. The need for private investment is recognized as is the method of linking the interests and resources of established business groups to state economic development strategies. Too often, however, the very economic and skill deficiencies which require economic development as a remedy are themselves obstacles to the entry of new firms. As fewer and fewer industries seek low skill employees, education and training become prerequisites for an area's economic development. Economic development in turn creates additional demands for skill upgrading and employment transition services when plants close or new technologies are used. The essential factor:

lack of sequencing in education, training, and employment strategies undermines effective economic development.

This problem is especially acute in rural areas where the success or failure of rural development strategies frequently hinge on the investment decisions of but one or two key firms. Longterm public sector programs and upgrading of rural education systems must precede and be concomittant to rural economic development. Rapid growth in areas blessed with natural resources may by-pass local residents, especially the poor. During the past twenty years, must progress has been made in understanding the factors that separate rural development from rural exploitation. By emphasizing open communication between the public and private sectors at the community, state and regional levels, the development process puts short and long-term economic growth objectives in the service of long-term social and political stability.

Goal 2: To develop local, state, and regional programs and policies which start from realistic assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of specific rural areas and work toward collaborative strategies joining public and private sector resources into rural development networks.

Comments:

o The development of a much needed National Rural Development Policy. Such a policy should be formulated by a coalition of local, sectional, regional, state and national rural representatives. It should be based on the

actual needs of a set of rural regions with defineable homogeneous human and ecological characteristics. Such regions need to be defined and established through the aegis of a U.S. Rural Development Commission to be appointed by the President of the United States and be comprised of representatives from both the public and private sectors.

o The creation of a series of rural advocates in each of the federal departments, bureaus and offices. Such advocates to have the rank of assistant secretaries or its equivalancies and be backed by staffs of commensurate size, importance and powers.

They would be charged with oversight regarding programs, regulations, statutes, et al. that pertain to rural (i.e., non-metropolitan) populations.

They should also constitute a federal Rural Development Council with sub-cabinet rank, charged with the coordination of all programs and services for rural Americans. Its principal purpose is to minimize replication, maximize services and develop more efficient and reasonable responses to the development needs of rural America through a federal coordination strategy.

o The development of more rational and flexible criteria whereby federal rural programs, services, guidelines, regulations and eligibility requirements are determined and administered. Such criteria should be responsive to rural conditions and not be derived as they have been, from urban models.

ISSUE: NATURE, TYPES, AND SCALE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

PROBLEM: Large scale, single project economic development initiatives rarely provide the variety of training and employment options needed to enrich rural life.

Discussion: Rural people tend to view economic development initiatives, and any externally initiated development activity, with great suspicion, ambivalence, distrust, and even outright antagonism. Given the real, sometimes desperate economic conditions of many parts of rural America, this basic distrust may seem shortsighted, even perverse, to outside, urban observers.

But true self-interest and widom lies at the heart of this emotional response. Too many rural areas--of which central Appalachia has been the most visible--have been the victims (and beneficiaries at times) of monolithic, single industry development. Other rural areas, witnessing the regressive effects of some company town environments, have preferred continued isolation to that kind of economic development.

The key fact is that rural people persist in rural areas because they prefer (at real cost in other respects) the quality of personal and social living not found elsewhere. Moving to urban and suburban areas has been all too easy a step, one forced on many rural people. Those who persist in rural areas, and those recent immigrants to rural communities, are not ready to sacrifice the quality of their

lives to any kind of economic development. But they see in the rekindling of some rural economics, models of efficient and sensitive matching of economic and social purposes.

Goal 3: To create rural development strategies and projects tailored to the needs of individual firms, the resources and needs of specific rural communities, and the qualities of life prized by rural residents.

Comments:

o Governments and the private sector should provide more realistic opportunities with appropriate incentives for coordinated training programs for rural Americans. Such programs need to be responsive to the needs of three principal rural interest groups:

- crosssection of rural persons
- rural communities
- private economic developers

o Agricultural Land Grant Colleges and Investors, Agricultural Extension Service, and rural proprietary schools and programs including those operated by community-based organizations should be involved more integrally in the full training and education components of short and long range rural community development.

Such efforts should both in scope and dimension resemble the halcycon days of the 30's, but should be designed and operated with the fuller participation of the private sector.

o Rural Community Development needs require a shift from a pervasive and growing trend of macro-economic to micro or medium range rural economic development. Emphasis in existing programs such as administered by the Small Business Administration and Farmers Home Administration need to be re-examined and designed to extend opportunities to small scale development needs of rural Americans.

o The changing trends in rural occupational options need to be more adequately taken into account in the nature and scope of curricula for both in school (K through post-secondary) as well as Adult and Continuing Education programs.

The redesign of curricula should be facilitated by the provision and concentration of needed resources by state, federal enabling authorities and legislation in a representative set of Rural Demonstration Zones which characteristically reflect the reterogeneity of rural American conditions. Such zones should provide a storehouse of data and information for the on-going growth and prioritizing of education and training curricula which respond more optimally to the changing demands of rural economic development.

ISSUE: THE ROLE OF INVESTMENT CAPITAL

PROBLEM: A serious lack of investment capital for rural economic development undermines community initiative and creates dependency on government leadership.

Discussion: Pressures on investment capital are intensive throughout the nation as government and large corporations

borrow massive sums at high rates. Smaller federal loan programs earmarked for rural areas have played a crucial development role since the Depression era. But even these programs have the effect of by-passing the small businesses and smaller farmers upon whom so much of rural economics is based.

Normally, one would expect that the trend toward population growth would in itself enrich the cash economics of many rural areas. Unfortunately, this expectation rarely is justified by the facts. For one, residents with access to transportation typically shop in the suburban and urban shopping centers where they work. Small town business centers are threatened as a result.

But a second trend is rural capital investment is more threatened still and runs counter even to the demographic trends. This unobtrusive threat lies in the Bank Holding Company Acts which various states have legislated. These laws permit banks in larger cities to expand their operations into small towns by buying existing banks or building new ones.

One persuasive argument of the bank holding company proponents is that economy of scale makes it not only desireable but inevitable that the independent small town banks be replaced by branches of the large city banks. Indeed, the small town bankers resisting the passage of the Bank Holding Company Acts are made to appear as backward fellows clinging to outmoded and inefficient banking practices and

denying their rural areas the blessings which such large banks would surely bring.

The argument for the Bank Holding Company Act goes as follows: "Banks in rural areas as extensions of the big banks with their up-to-date computerized methods will mean greater internal operational efficiency with lower costs and higher bank profits and, more broadly, the farmers and small town residents will enter a new era of economic development brought about through access to the great financial strength, wide range of services, and broad-visioned, dynamic policies of the bigger banks."

Evidence from studies carried out in Georgia, however, points to the opposite conclusion from those sincerely put forward by the bank holding company proponents. In that State studies by the Independent Bankers of Georgia show that it is the independent small town bank and not the large city bank which expresses economy, and appropriateness, of scale in rural areas, and which on the average represents both internal efficiency and greater external development for the community. For example, statistical studies in that State have consistently shown an average profits-to-assets ratio which is higher for the smaller banks than for the State's larger banks.

But there is a deeper, more significant factor than bank profitability which is involved in the steady disappearance of the local small town bank in the rural area, and that is the loss of personal contact between the banker and the

resident of the area. It is from personal knowledge of people that the banker can judge a man or a woman's character and determine whether that person is credit worthy. The large city banks typically operate through their small town branches with decisions made in the home office and based on computer printout data which in turn are based on preset formulas, which effectively block judgements based on personal character. The problem is that development is made by people and comes through drive, strength, determination, and personal competence. In a word, it is not collateral, but human character which produces development.

Goal 4: To assure that investment capital policies and practices treat rural areas with equity and do not produce unintended negative consequences harmful not only to rural areas but to the nation as a whole.

Comments:

o The more effective coordination of existing federal and state loan and investment programs needs to occur. Such investment programs need to more adequately reflect the rural development needs of small scale and micro economic enterprises. Particular emphasis should be placed on rural development loans and investment financing which range from $5,000 to $50,000.

o Rescheduling of priorities and incentives accompanied by more solid education and outreach programs of field staff needs to take place.

o The availability of low interest long term loan guarantees for the upkeep and development of small scale farm and non-farm rural enterprises need to occur. Small scale individual and family enterprises provide the largest number of jobs in the U.S.A. Greater emphasis and priority needs to be provided to the preservation and growth of such enterprises. This is particularly the case in rural America.

o Continuing and Adult Education programs need to be strengthened in rural America. This is particularly true in financial management, micro-computer technology, marketing, and multiple skill development and enterprise management.

o Redesign of Unemployment Insurance programs and Minimum Wage Guidelines and eligibility requirements for rural small scale economic enterprises and agricultural workers needs to occur.

ISSUE: BALANCING HUMAN RESOURCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

PROBLEM: The "classic" experience of agricultural societies throughout the world over the past century has been one of increasing mechanization resulting in farmland consolidation into larger units with higher capitalization and lower manpower requirements, resulting in turn in outmigration and poverty for those displaced by mechanization. Today, energy costs, mass production farming methods, and rapid changes in manufacturing technology all reinforce this experience.

Discussion: The tragedy of these agricultural societies, rural America included, has been the almost universal failure at great cost to all of basic social institutions--family, church, schools, government--to cope with the profound changes wrought by mechanization that process and that failure continue today. Education programs in rural schools and colleges, even allowing for budgeting and staffing disadvantages, do not prepare young people to negotiate careers in either rural or urbanized environments. The new technologies that should create entrepreneurial opportunities for rural residents are all too frequently not taught. The agricultural knowledge and skills needed by part-time, small-scale farmers are not taught. Access to real-life work environments and opportunities for career exploration are unnecessarily restricted.

A critical issue is the extent to which education and training program managers are aware of and responding to technological advances. The major missing element in the people/technology equation is the lack of planned linkages. Educational institutions and private sector employers have been virtual strangers. Educators and training practitioners have acted from adversarial roles harmful to the best interests of young people and adult learners.

Goal 5: To create more effective and balanced linkages between technological opportunities and the educational preparation of rural youths and adults.

Comment:

o Greater linkages need to be created between a range of disciplines in both secondary and postsecondary programs and institutions. Efforts need to be made to reverse a trend of over-reliance on technological development at the expense of more reasoned human development.

o We need a variety of collaborative mechanisms for private and public sector involvements. The development of rural work-education councils in a variety of rural communities is called for. A joint administration and funding for such an initiative should be made available by public and private sources including federal and state government, rural advocacy groups, land grant colleges, farm cooperatives and national and local manufacturing, trade and industrial organizations.

o The establishment of a Rural American Human Resource and Technology Council with regional and local counterparts. Such a council should be appointed by the President of the United States and be charged with:

- Comprehensive state of the art overview of the relationship between human and technological development in rural America. These should be updated every three years.

- Enumeration and analysis of model programs, activities and enterprises which exemplify optimum balance.

- Projection of trends and recommendations of the types of education and training most responsive to these developments.

ISSUE: LINKING LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROBLEM: The United States contains roughly 2.3 billion acres. A third of this acreage is in federal ownership--the primitive areas and unsettled vastness of the public lands. About ten or maybe fifteen percent of land, depending on the basis for calculation, is metropolitan, urban and suburban. The remaining 50-55 percent of the nation is "working land" producing food, timber, energy and mineral resources, and water.

The majority of the American land is that it is under historic new pressures. Where once agricultural could use up land and move, on, now, according to the United States Department of Agriculture statisticians, there are only 52 million acres of "prime" agricultural land left that are not already in use. At the same time, the need for increasing productivity--for food to sell abroad to offset oil-import costs, and more recently, to produce biomass feedstocks for conversion into fuels and energy--is going to add to the pressures on the working land-base. Other products--lumber, fibers, fossil fuels, hard-rock minerals--compete for the same land. Strippable coal underlies some of the best corn-producing acreage in the world. Industrial wastes and demands for water threaten the productivity of agricultural lands.

Resettlement from other areas has boosted the population growth rate of non-metropolitan counties as a class above that of metropolitan counties for the first time. By 1975, manufacturing, not agriculture, had come to provide

the largest single category of rural jobs. Moreover, the rate of new jobs of all kinds in rural areas is increasing twice as fast as jobs in metropolitan areas. The result of this activity is the conversion of three million acres of rural land to "urban" uses each year--a situation that more than likely will bring a great many rural counties the same kind of growing pains experienced by suburban counties during the 1950's and 1960's.

Discussion: The new pressures will require responses of a kind unfamiliar to most policy makers, to rural people, and to land-use planners and environmentalists. The overlay, in rural counties, of what is essentially urban economic development is in many respects a good and desirable event. On the other hand, unless this overlay is carefully mediated, it can, and will, destroy the resource-based economy arising from the production of renewable and non-renewable natural resources. Without effective land use policies guiding growth and change in rural America, the chances are better than ever that many of our working landscapes can wind up as economic wastelands rather than part of the most productive land-base of any nation on the face of the globe.

Goal 6: To establish national and state policies which will preserve irreplaceable agricultural farmlands as a vital national resource while encouraging multiple, well-balanced uses for less sensitive areas.

Comment:

o The profound improvements in agricultural landuses which were promulgated by the Agricultural Extension Service in the 30's need to be significantly updated, broadened and reinvigorated.

Such efforts should be led by rural developers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and actualize and flow out of national and state rural development policies.

Such efforts need to be comprised of a number of vital components:

- General public awareness initiatives regarding rural resource preservation, management and optimal long range multip[illegible]sage.

- Revision of existing laws, regulating practices and statutes governing agricultural lands both private and public with primary focus on the preservation of irreplacable prime farmlands and woodlands.

- Specific education and training programs developed and led by Agricultural Land Grant Colleges, Community Colleges, State Teachers Training Instutitions in conjunction with a collection of private rural economic interests, including cooperative,advocacy and community-based organizations.

- Particular emphasis on the procedural usage, both substantive and methodological, of key resources

- Water, both surface and underground

- Top soil

- Symbiotic ground and underground land uses
- Woodlands

o An expanded and intensified effort nationally, regionally and by states to develop and actualize anti-pollution of the rural countryside through complimentary policies and procedures. Specific emphasis should be put in the following:

- Nuclear waste pollution
- Animal wastes pollution
- Chemical pollution
- Water, soil and ground pollution

o Rural development requires a significant broadening from more singular emphasis on agriculture to the more representative needs of present day rural American manufacturing and service development needs.

Reorientation, education and training of U.S. Department of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce and the Corps of Army Engineers to reestablish effective conservation policies.

ISSUE: LINKING EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PROBLEM: Rural economic development cannot occur without parallel human resource development. All too frequently, rural inhabitants, particularly those with limited academic and vocational achievement are relegated to supportive, low income positions in economic development efforts. Deficient

and sparse rural education and training programs and services have resulted in the importation of skilled personnel and managers. Thus, in the main, only limited improvement of local educational and economic development efforts occurs.

Discussion: Human resource development, traditionally, has been the purview of the educational system. This has occurred through post-secondary programs, as well as public and private alternative educational/training programs and services. The public educational system, frequently, is the most important institution in a rural community. It is expected to uphold traditional values and life-styles, as well as prepare its youth to participate in and contribute to the survival and development of their community in the future. It is frequently both the pursuer of the status quo and the principal agent for change. This paradoxical role has permitted other institutions in rural communities to exert a disproportionate influence on community development endeavors.

The rural economic base poses significant problems for rural young people. The lack of occupational diversity means that few job and on-the-job training opportunities are available and role models for jobs other than farmwork, marginal and blue-collar positions are scarce (Marshall, 1976). Private and public sector employment opportunities are severely limited, and although the location of more manufacturing plants in rural areas, especially in the Southeast, has resulted in somewhat more diversified employment opportunity, a large proportion of these jobs are going to workers

imported from urban areas (Miles, 1973). The problem is compounded by inferior labor market information systems and inadequate educational and vocational preparation.

The need for more accurate and complete labor market information and occupational counseling in rural areas is acute. Responses to a 1974 survey of rural youth indicated that the 800 male and female high school seniors in the sample had very limited understanding of the world of work, were insecure and suspicious about their prospects for employment, and were unfamiliar with the federal-state employment service. A recent survey of job placement services provided by public school systems in the United States reveals that only 35 percent of school districts with fewer than 25,000 students had such services as compared to 71 percent of the districts with 25,000 students or more (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1976). Federal and state placement agencies (including the U.S. Employment Service) have limited coverage of, and thus limited effectiveness in, rural areas (Marshall, 1976).

Educational attainment is another area where sharp differences between non-metropolitan and metropolitan populations are apparent. In 1974, in the nation as a whole, 53.9 percent of non-metropolitan residents over age 25 had completed high school, in contrast to 59.8 percent in central cities and 68.5 percent in the suburban rings. Within the non-metropolitan group, more exacting breakdowns emphasize these differences. In counties with no town larger than

2,500, only 42.5 percent of the adults had completed high school, compared with 52.8 percent in counties with a town of 2,500 to 24,999, and 62.0 percent in those designated non-metropolitan with a town of 25,000 or more (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975: 54, Table 9). Even these figures are a bit deceptive since as high a proportion of non-metropolitan as urban youth aged 16 or 17 are enrolled in school. The drop-off occurs rapidly in the next higher age group, because significantly lower proportions of rural youth are enrolled in higher education (Sanders, 1977: 103). This is consistent with a great number of studies that have shown much lower levels of educational attainment among rural and farm adolescents, in comparison to their urban counterparts.

Adequate educational preparation is a crucial element in a smooth school-to-work transition; unfortunately, rural educational systems labor under the burdens of inadequate resources, training and support services. Vocational schools, in many instances, are still directing students into traditional rural job paths, mainly agriculture or homemaking. During the period between 1950 and 1966 when farming jobs declined to the lowest point in decades, enrollment in vocational agriculture rose to a new high (Department of Agriculture, 1969). These educational and employment difficulties are often exacerbated by geographic isolation, inadequate medical and social services, and a pattern of out-migration to urban areas that further

contributes to the depletion of an already inadequate tax base in rural communities.

Goal 7: To establish national, regional and state priorities and generate action initiatives which generate realistic linkages between education and training with rural economic development. This should occur through a collaborative aegis of a crosssection of public and private rural sector interests.

Comments:

o General upgrading and diversification of rural education and training opportunities is vital to rural economic development. This can only come about through a series of fundamental changes in rural education programs:

- Equity of funding of existing educational entitlements with metropolitan educational programs.

- Generation of revised more current and diversified teacher training programs and curriculum offerings at state teacher colleges, community colleges, vocational colleges and state land grant universities.

- Enlargement and intensification of rural secondary educational counseling services which combine professional and lay role models in direct orientation guidance of multiple career options.

- Market expansion of adult, continuing and community education programs which combine professional educators with diversified community vocational specilists in on-going community based education and training experiences.

- Providing expanded and idiomatically accessible occupation information, economic indices and trends, and marketing data through micro-computer based retrieval and dissemination systems, similar to but greatly improved of existing state occupational information coordinating systems.

- Expanding and supporting rural education and training programs conducted by private economic enterprises, community based organization and proprietary schools. This should include financial aid, data and information sharing, curriculum development and integration with public schools.

- Federal and state incentives and support for the redevelopment of rural community based schools, with centralized schools serving as resource development centers.

- Expansion of joint school and community based development programs which involve school attending youth in on-going practical supervised hands-on, real education/ work experiences.

- The generation of rural-metropolitan school based community exchange programs for people, ideas and information.

- Revised state and federal guidelines of public education administrative procedures and content which responds more adequately to the idiomatic needs of rural development and not metropolitan priorities.

- Generation of small and micro based economic enterprise education and training programs which strengthen current economic enterprises and the growth of this and new ones by providing training to members of and/or entire

family units. Such programs should begin with the particular needs of rural enterprise development.

- Generation of national, regional and state curriculum development and teacher training programs which promulgate rural multiple skill development.

ISSUE: ENHANCING TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE RURAL SUPPORT SERVICES

PROBLEM: Diseconomies of scale can have devastating effects on the operation of programs and services in rural areas.

Discussion: Rural areas are typically the last to benefit from industrial public services, as was the case with electrification, sanitary water treatment, roads, and other components of an economic development infrastructure. The same is true (only more so) for social services. Health, education, skill training, libraries, recreation services all suffer in comparison to their urban counter parts. Longer distances and greater dispersion of people create larger per capita operating and maintenance costs. Communications and activities are more difficult to maintain despite the fact that individuals are more likely to be known to one another. Leadership gets stretched thin simply because the relatively few people with talent and inclination for leadership are called upon for every purpose.

This circle of resistance to positive development of rural communities is the norm. Examples of alternatives do exist. Some of these examples result from influxes of capital and leadership derived from outside investments in rural areas. More typical examples derive from gradual improvements in education and social services initiated by local leaders.

The core problem is one of helping local, indiginous leaders to find the leverage they need over financial and political resources that can make a real dent in the back-log of rural development issues in their area. Basic educational skills and greater awareness of opportunities (both rural and non-rural) for careers are essential if rural areas are to develop the depth of leadership and breadth of interests essential for community self-development.

Unfortunately, two of the most inhibiting forces in rural communities are lack of self-confidence and a sense of lack of control over important decisions affecting rural life. These two forces reinforce each other. Lack of cultural sophistication and lack of access to the modern technology of information and influence give these forces, or fears, a grounding in reality. Decisions affecting education and economic development frequently are made far from home by people with suburban or urban problems most in mind. Schools are closed and consolidated (typically at little or no net fiscal saving) without consideration of the importance of the school to community cohesiveness and

businesses. State economic development agencies work with prospective clients without adequate consultation with communities being considered. Creating the intellectural skills and motivation to assume self-responsibility in the face of these barriers is the crucial task of building rural support services.

Goal 8: To rebuild the self-confidence of rural American communities by ensuring adequate social services and by creative use of the skills and energies of all rural people.

Comment:

Crucial rural support services need to become an integral component of rural development in order to assure equity in the development of programs and services with metropolitan counterparts.

o A key element in the general deficiency of rural development is the lack of adequate access to and impact on decision-making structures and processes which fundamentally effect rural communities. It is vital that local rural communities have a greater role and voice in the determination of rural developments schema which all too frequently have been foisted on them as derivative urban programs.

Multi-leveled, two-way decision making planning and development processes employing up-to-date micro computer technology needs to be made available as a regular adjunct to public and private outreach rural development programs.

Every rural community of 2,500 or more persons should have access to a one-stop micro-computer media center which provides the following fundamental element of services:

- All revelant governmental programs and services, including eligibility requirements, participation criteria, etc.

- Easily identifiable laws, statutes and regulations which apply to rural development.

- Economic, educational and training indices relevant to the growing, extraction, processing, marketing and servicing of goods.

- Capacity for retrieval, dissemination and development of data and information relevant to rural development.

- Transportation and Communication allowances need to be included in all rural programs and services. THen should provide for additional resources, including labor costs, to offset the diseconomy of scale which pervasively prevent rural communities from developing and operating programs on a basis of equity with urban communities.

- Inter-regional rural communities exchanges of information and people needs to be facilitated. Also greater exposure of extra rural community program and services, need to be made possible through design, planning administration and operations. This includes workshops, conferences, orientation and training sessions at national, state, regional and national levels.

ISSUE: SERVING SPECIAL RURAL INTEREST GROUPS

PROBLEM: The sense of common social fate across groups in traditional rural communities needs to be reformulated today to recognize the gradually increasing social, political, and economic stature of special interest groups and the greater complexity of economic development. As groups better understand the limitations imposed by resource fragmentation, they should seek accommodations and cohesiveness in new initiatives.

DISCUSSION: The disadvantages of rural America as a whole, and the extraordinary disadvantages of specific rural interest groups, are systemic in origin. Creating lasting remedies to these conditions will require greater attention to the inclusion of all groups in problem-solving activities together with traditional rural power structures. As traditional power groups discover limitations on their abilities to cope with economic development demands, they too should prove more open to collaborative action than has been the case in years past.

The importance of this shift in inter-group relations is essential for further improvements in the services and opportunities available to special rural interest groups. Who are these groups? We include all groups who still bear disproportionate burdens of poverty, physical and mental handicapped, lack of education, lack of sanitary facilities and decent housing, and a surplus of discrimination and even fear.

Reform programs of the past two decades have helped to educate, feed, and house the poor, the handicapped, and the victims of discrimination. Participation in politics has been democratized progressively. But one cost of these programs has been to stigmatize the individuals served and to disrupt a sense of community. A new sense of community "wholeness" is needed, one that accounts for the changed status of disadvantaged groups, recognizes the limitations under which those groups and established groups operate, and provides a common goal for improvements in the full life of the community.

Among the problems still facing rural America:

o The relative income position of rural residents improved during the seventies, but for all major racial/ethnic groups income remains lower in rural areas than in urban.

o Increased labor force participation by women has occurred in rural as well as urban areas, but rural women continue to occupy lower paying positions than urban women or men of all residence categories.

o A disproportionate share of the nation's poor continues to live in rural places; the majority of the rural poor is located in the South, reflecting the existence of persistently low-income counties in that region.

o Despite increased educational attainment, rural students are more likely to enroll in school later, progress through school more slowly, complete fewer school years,

and score lower on national assessment tests than their urban counterparts.

o Rural minorities such as Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and low-income Whites are more disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment than their urban counterparts.

o Rural areas have the lowest amounts of medical resources (e.g., physicians, hospital beds) per capita, while the average health status of rural people remains somewhat lower than for urban residents.

o Housing conditions in rural communities improved markedly during the seventies in regard to increased construction and decreased substandard housing, but by almost any measure of adequacy (e.g., complete plumbing or lack of crowding) housing continues to be poorer in rural areas.

o Because of reductions in local transit systems, intercity bus lines, and air carrier services, rural residents have less access to public transportation than was the case previously; this is especially critical for the poor, elderly, handicapped, and the young who often lack private transportation alternatives.

o Proportionately fewer rural households have access to sewer and water services than urban; many rural housing units continue to be constructed without connection to public sewer or water lines and must rely on private systems.

o The level of per capita expenditure by local governments in urban counties continues to exceed that of rural counties; this gap in overall spending widened during the seventies.

o Gifted and talented rural youth have fewer opportunities for education, special tutoring and training than do their urban and suburban counterparts.

GOAL 9: To improve the education, training, and work opportunities for all rural special needs populations through a policy of greater inclusion of their diverse resources in the design and implementation of human resource and economic development programs.

COMMENT: When underlying good will and trust are created at a leadership level in rural communities, the same factors of size and weak infrastructure that frequently are obstacles to economic growth can be turned into aides in social and political development. Rural communities with diverse, non-monolithic leadership groups can achieve wonders of cooperation that show positive results and confirm the advantages of rural areas even under conditions of relative economic status.

For example, rural communities have demonstrated the capacity to absorb physically and emotionally handicapped youth into their economic mainstream without the institutional "solutions" of urbanized areas. Rural areas also find ways to "hide" their handicapped citizens. The difference between hiding and facing the needs of people well known to a whole community is a matter of leadership first and extra resources second. Resources are crucial in that they reduce the sacrifice and improve the quality of

efforts made by leaders and others.

Resources are also crucial when used to develop accurate information about the scope of special needs problems within specific communities. With 90 percent of America's rural blacks living in the southeastern quarter of the nation, for example, it is obvious that a different set of key issues will pertain to those states than to the northeast. Communities must help themselves; that is true. But those that accept the challenge of self-initiative must be rewarded with recognition and assistance from outside. The world is too complex to believe that rural America's needs for community services can be answered totally from within. Priority attention should be paid to:

o Good schools.

o Access to technical training in occupations in demand regionally.

o Well-organized youth recreation and community service programs.

o Specialized teachers and counselors capable or organizing networks of employers, service agencies and special interest group leaders.

o Assistance in community self-assessments of demographics, resources, current relationships between employment and special needs groups.

o Rural Economic Development Zones. Such zones should be established in no fewer than 20 regions of the nation. Moratoria on existing statutes, regulations and program guidelines could be instituted on a 3-to-5-year test basis.

ISSUE: RURAL COALITION-BUILDING

PROBLEM: What is called for is not the elimination of healthy and productive competition, but competition which is encouraged to take place in an atmosphere of rational collaboration. Past rural development efforts have been essentially adversarial: state against state, county against county.

DISCUSSION: Some important vanguard efforts in this regard during the latter part of the 1970's were in the form of local and state rural work-education councils. These action councils are composed of leaders and representatives of both the public and private sectors including education, industry, commerce, agriculture, labor, government and advocacy groups (see A Charter for Improved Rural Youth Franchise, National Institute for Work and Learning, 1978).

Such neutral action councils provide opportunities for different, often seemingly antithetically disposed groups to begin to work in mutually advantageous give-and-take pursuits of the probable beneficial outcomes for communities in the context of states, regions and the nation as a whole.

GOAL 10: To develop collaborative mechanisms and processes to build coalitions of rural interests for more rational rural development.

COMMENT:

o Resources for such an effort should come from both the public and private sectors. All program expenses would be expected to be generated by respective councils.

Core staff funds should not be less than $30,000 per annum and no more than $75,000 per annum depending on the size of geographic stage of development, levels and types of activities. Funding sources should be both federal, state, and local and be equally shared by public and private interest spheres.

-- Public funds should come from earmarked set-asides from existing and/or new programs in education, rural development, economic development, and manpower development as well as local and state taxes.

-- Private funds should come from membership contributions and tax-exempt contributions.

o A national intermediary organization should be developed for the express purpose of providing the necessary coordination, advocacy, information retrieval, development and dissemination, and planning for more effective rural development.